



Vale Russell Cuthbert Raymond OAM

It is with a great deal of sadness that the Ethnic Communities Council of WA (ECCWA) acknowledges the passing of Mr Russell Raymond yesterday.

“The Ethnic Communities Council of WA (ECCWA) and many of its member organisations are today mourning the loss of Mr Russell Raymond, who has made an incredible contribution not just to ECCWA, but on a state and national level to many organisations within the multicultural, aged and community services sectors”, said Council President Ramdas Sankaran.

“In January 1994, Russell was awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for services to the North Perth Migrant Resource Centre (NPMRC) and to the Media. Russell’s journalism career included being sub editor at the West Australian and the Editor of The Countryman. His contribution to the NPMRC i.e. Board member since its inception and his period as Chairman far exceeded that of all others, was impressive. Under his leadership the Centre continued to prosper despite the ALP government ending its core funding. The growth of the Centre led former Minister for Immigration, the Hon Philip Ruddock to remark that NPMRC was a beacon amongst migrant resource centres. However, what is yet to be formally recognised is his immense contribution to ECCWA”, he added.

“In the late 90s under Russell’s Presidency, ECCWA had annual turnovers of over .5 million and full time senior policy positions focussing on issues relating to women, youth and family. It was during that period that the Ethnic Disability Advocacy Centre was established under ECCWA’s auspices. So it is hardly surprising that we fondly refer to this period as the Golden era of ECCWA. He also served as the Administrator of ECCWA in a voluntary capacity for many years”.

“At the national level, Russell was as a Deputy Chairperson representing WA on the FECCA Executive for more than 5 years. He served FECCA in other capacities namely Honorary Secretary for 4 years, its representative on the SBS Community Advisory Committee for many years, its representative on Centrelink’s Older Persons Reference Group etc. He also played a substantial role in organising two FECCA conferences in Perth and the first National Conference of Immigrant and Refugee Women which was organised by ECCWA and FECCA”, said Mr. Sankaran.

Russell served on the boards of many organisations, including some in office bearer capacity, and some of them are, the Australia Day Council, AdvoCare, Umbrella Community Services, the WA Sri Lankan Association and the OZ Concert committee.

“Russell was a role model in so many ways for hundreds of migrants and refugees and I am thankful to be one of them. He was a great listener, had a way of making complex issues easily understandable verbally and in written form, made everyone feel special in the way he interacted with them and gave so much of his time for a wide variety of social causes. These were some of the qualities that endeared him to so many Australians” said Mr Sankaran.

“ECCWA is greatly appreciative of Russell’s immense contribution in promoting community harmony and social cohesion as well as his advocacy on so many social issues of concern to all Australians. He will be sadly missed but fondly remembered by our Council, our sector and indeed many societal institutions that he was a part of which have sought to achieve greater harmony, social cohesion, and a much better deal for CaLD and indigenous Australians,” he added.

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4-7) succinctly sums up, the giant of a man, that Russell was. ECCWA extends its sincere condolences to his wife Shirley, their children, grandchildren and the extended family on the loss of an admirable Australian”.

Vale Russell Raymond

For media enquiries contact Ramdas Sankaran on 0418275786 or Suresh Rajan on 0403276960.